

# Maple Ash

## Public Art Fact Sheet



City of Tempe  
Cultural Services  
3340 South Rural Road  
Tempe, AZ 85282  
480-350-5287  
480-350-5161 FAX  
[www.tempe.gov/arts](http://www.tempe.gov/arts)



Photo: Craig Smith

**Artwork:** Two projects that incorporate Irrigation Standpipes:  
Project One—Dedicated to the Uniqueness of the Neighborhood  
Project Two—The History of Flood Irrigation

**Location:** Set into the sidewalk on the south side of the fire station (east side of Ash Avenue, between University Drive and Fifth Street)

**Artist:** Nina Solomon, Chris Rowley and Ruben Valenzuela

**Completion:** 2005

**Material:** Concrete standpipe base covered with plaster, river rock and tiles with historic photograph, manhole cover, carved-up pipes and metal strips

**Description:** Irrigation standpipes have been turned into centerpieces of public art through the efforts of members of the Maple Ash Neighborhood Association.

The first piece represents the architecture of the immediate neighborhood with earthenware representations of windows, doors, picket fences and a curlicue of wrought iron crowning the top. The second project honors the watering system that allows the neighborhood one of its most prized and prominent features: lush vegetation. Around the seven-foot-tall standpipe is a tiny but elegant plaza with metal strips dividing the area into graveled surfaces, symbolizing a river surrounded by fields, which is exactly what Tempe was many years ago. There also are stools and a bench on the little plaza. Tiles on that pipe are imprinted with historic photos of the area. Each project features plant and water imagery.

**Funding:** A city of Tempe Neighborhood Grant funded the projects. The Salt River project also was a contributor and donated materials and services. Neighbors volunteered more than 1,000 hours to plan, design, fabricate and install the project.

**Artists' biographies:** Nina Solomon holds a Master of Fine Arts degree in Sculpture from Arizona State University. "For the past six years, in addition to my own artwork, I have been working on public projects, many of which have involved communities. Participatory projects are an interesting and rewarding endeavor — helping people within a particular community reshape their visual environment." Chris Rowley lives in the Maple Ash Neighborhood. Ruben Valenzuela is a landscape architect.

**Artist statement:** "Figurative sculpture is the basis of my personal work," Solomon said. "For many years, I've been exploring the relief format. I enjoy relief sculpture for its tenuous existence between the two and three dimensional and for its narrative possibilities that have been exploited by many cultures to convey their societies' ideas in monumental ways. I like these echoes of societal propaganda that add another ambiguous layer to the mix. In my newest work I am exploring the cultural echoes carried by the detritus of our society."